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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
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S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 14369

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EAID, ET, US
SUBJECT: POLICY ON US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA

REFS: (A) ADDIS TOAID 101 OF NOVEMBER 20
(B) STATE 262137

1. SUMMARY. WE RECOMMEND THAT ACTION BE TAKEN NOW TO SCHEDULE THE SHIPMENT OF 5,000 METRIC TONS OF GRAIN TO ETHIOPIA BY MID-JANUARY FOR DROUGHT RELIEF PURPOSES. WE WOULD NOT WISH, HOWEVER, TO NOTIFY THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT OF THIS DECISION AT THIS TIME.

2. AS SET FORTH IN REFTEL B, IT IS CURRENTLY US POLICY TO CONCLUDE NO NEW AGREEMENTS WITH ETHIOPIA IN THE FIELDS OF ECONOMIC AID OR DROUGHT RELIEF, RECOVERY AND REHABILITATION. AS HAS HBEEN STATED PRUBLICLY, ALL AID PROGRAMS ARE UNDER REVIEW AT PRESENT. WE BELIEVE IT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT DURING THIS REVIEW PERIOD TO OBTAIN AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE REGARDING THE INTENTIONS OF THE PRESENT ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT. WE ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN WHETHER IT EVINCES STRONG INTEREST IN CONTINUING CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE US, WHETHER IT SHOWS SIGNS OF DESISTING FROM THE BRUTALITY DEMONSTRATED BY THE EXECUTIONS OF NOVEMBER 23, AND WHETHER IT SHOWS INTENTIONS OF INSTITUTING A TOTALITARIAN SYSTEM IN THIS COUNTRY. AT PRESENT IT IS DIFFICULT TO FORECAST HOW SOON CLEAR EVIDENCE OF
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THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS IN THESE RESPECTS WILL

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MATERIALIZE.

3. IN CONTRAST TO OTHER PARTS OF OUR AID PROGRAMS, HOWEVER, WE THINK IT IS ESSENTIAL TO GIVE IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION TO OUR POLICY WITH REGARD TO SHIPMENTS OF RELIEF GRAIN. THE REASON FOR THIS IS THAT A POLICY OF NON-DECISION IN THIS AREA COULD CONCEIVABLY CAUSE GEAT HUMAN SUFFERING IN EARLY 1975 IN ETHIOPIA. HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS IN OUR JUDGMENT THEREFORE REQUIRE THAT WE NOW ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF WHETHER AND WHEN THE US SHOULD SEND A SHIPMENT OF RELIEF GRAIN TO ETHIOPIA IN EARLY 1975.

4. OUR LATEST ASSESSMENT OF ETHIOPIA'S RELIEF GRAIN REQUIREMENTS, AND OUR RECOMMENDATIONS THEREON, WERE SUBMITTED TO AID/W ON NOVEMBER 22 PER TOAID A-101. IN THE MEANWHILE, FOUR NEW FACTORS HAVE ENTERED THE PICTURE:
A. WE HAVE HAD NOTICE OF ARRIVAL OF 2375 MT GRAIN O/A DECEMBER 28. THIS GRAIN, WHICH WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED FOR ERITREA AND TIGRE FOOD FOR WORK PROJECTS, AND WHICH IS NOW ASSIGNED TO THE RELIEF AND REHABILI-TATION COMMISSION FOR EMRGENCY RELIEF PURPOSES, WILL HELP MAINTAIN THE FOOD PIPELINE TO THE MOST DISTRESSED AREAS.
B. WE HAVE BEEN ADVISED BY THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR THAT THE CANADIAN DONATION HAS BEEN SCALED DOWN TO A MAXIMUM OF 20,000 MT FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1975, WITH ARRIVAL OF FIRST 10,000 MT BEING POSTPONED FROM FIRST TO SECOND QUARTER OF 1975.
C. THERE IS SOME INDICATIONS THAT OUR RESTRAINT (PLUS THAT OF OTHER DONORS) IN MAKING GRAIN COMMITMENTS HAS MOVED (PERHAPS FORCED) GOE TO UNDERTAKE CERTAIN MODEST SELF-HELP MEASURES SUCH AS PURCHASING 4,000 MT GRAIN WITH ITS OWN FUNDS (IT IS NOW BARGAINING FOR 2,500 MT MORE), AND MOUNTING A COMMENDABLE EMERGENCY RELIEF EFFORT IN HARRARGHE PROVINCE WITH ITS OWN PERSONNEL AND RESOURCES.
D. GOE ALSO APPARENTLY MAKING MORE REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF QUANTITY OF GRAIN REQUIRED FOR RELIEF
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PURPOSES, I.E. BACKING OFF FROM THE 278,000 MT ESTIMATE FOR CY 75 WHICH HAS BEEN STRESSED SINCE AUGUST AND RETURNING TO EARLIER 90,000 MT ESTIMATE FOR FIRST SIX MONTHS, CY 75, WITH POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER MODIFICATION DEPENDING UPON FINDINGS OF MIN. AG. CROP PRODUCTION SURVEY NOW UNDERWAY.

5. CONSONANT WITH OUR RECOMMENDATION IN TOAID 101,

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BUT TAKING THESE FOUR FACTORS INTO CONSIDERATION, WE NOW BELIEVE BEST POLICY IS FOR AID/W TO BEGIN MAKING ARRANGEMENTS IMMEDIATELY FOR SHIPMENT OF 5,000 MT TO ETHIOPIA WITH SUCH LEAD-TIME AS REQUIRED TO PERMIT SHIPMENT TO LEAVE US PORT BY MID-JANUARY 1975.

6. BOTH FOR POLITICAL REASONS AND SO AS TO ENCOURAGE MAXIMUM GOE SELF-HELP MEASURES, THIS DECISION TO CALL FORWARD 5,000 MT GRAIN SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE DISCLOSED FOR TIME BEING. THUS WE WOULD NOT NOTIFY GOE VIRTUALLY UNTIL DEPARTURE OF SHIPMENT. THIS APPROACH ALSO GIVES US THE ADVANTAGE THAT IN CASE IMPORTANT CHANGES SHOULD OCCUR WHICH BEAR UPON THE ISSUE, THE REQUESTED GRAIN SHIPMENT COULD MORE EASILY BE CANCELLED OR DIVERTED.
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